



## **GOV. MALLOY: BE AWARE OF DISASTER ASSISTANCE SCAMS, ESPECIALLY RELATED TO FEMA**

(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Dannel P. Malloy, Attorney General George Jepsen and Department of Consumer Protection Commissioner William M. Rubenstein are warning Connecticut residents to be aware of potential scams in the coming days and weeks, especially ones in which scammers offer to help people get disaster assistance from FEMA.

“Residents should always request photo identification and read the fine print if the person is at their front door, and if it’s over the phone, then people need to be even more careful,” Governor Malloy said. “Unfortunately, the damage caused by Storm Sandy has left many homeowners, renters, and business owners vulnerable to fraudulent offers of help. To anyone who is caught trying to gouge or scam people in Connecticut in any way, I want to be clear – we will find you, and we will make sure you are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

“Residents across the state continue to cope with power outages, property damage and other disruptions to normal living and, unfortunately, this often leads to attempts from unscrupulous individuals to take advantage,” Attorney General Jepsen said. “Consumers should take necessary precautions to protect themselves, both personally and financially, and should immediately report any instance of potential fraud.”

“Consumers need to be extra vigilant to guard against being further victimized by fraudsters hoping to turn this disaster into undeserved profits,” Commissioner Rubenstein said. “Know who you are dealing with, make sure they are properly licensed, get everything in writing and never pay in full before the job is done. Consumers should always contact the Department of Consumer Protection to check out the credentials of contractors or to report suspected fraud.”

Here is one general tip intended to prevent fraud:

- When contracting for home repairs, homeowners should always use licensed local contractors, and ask for and investigate their references. Furthermore, be sure to ask for a written estimate from at least three contractors that includes labor and materials, read the fine print before signing a contract, and do not pay a contractor in-full in advance.

Here are a few tips to help prevent fraud specifically related to FEMA:

- FEMA-contracted inspectors always call to schedule an appointment before visiting a home, always wear a photo ID and always know the applicant's name and registration number. Inspectors never charge a fee for help.
- Those seeking federal assistance should never reveal personal information if the person or organization making the request cannot provide identification showing the state, federal or voluntary agency serving the disaster.
- Residents and businesses in Fairfield, New Haven, Middlesex and New London Counties who suffered damage as a result of Storm Sandy must register with FEMA by phone or online to access possible federal assistance.

To register by phone, residents can call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). The TTY line for people with speech or hearing disabilities is 1-800-462-7585. The line is open from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., seven days per week.

To register online, applications may be completed at [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov). If residents have disaster assistance questions, they may call the FEMA Helpline at 1-800-621-3362.